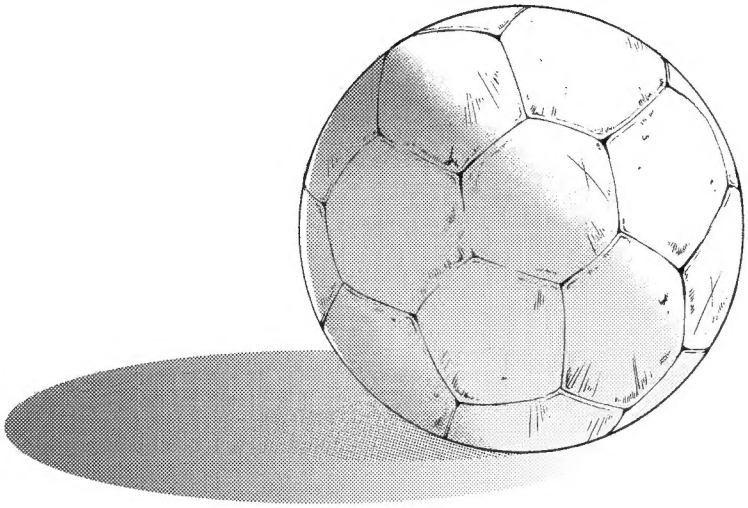
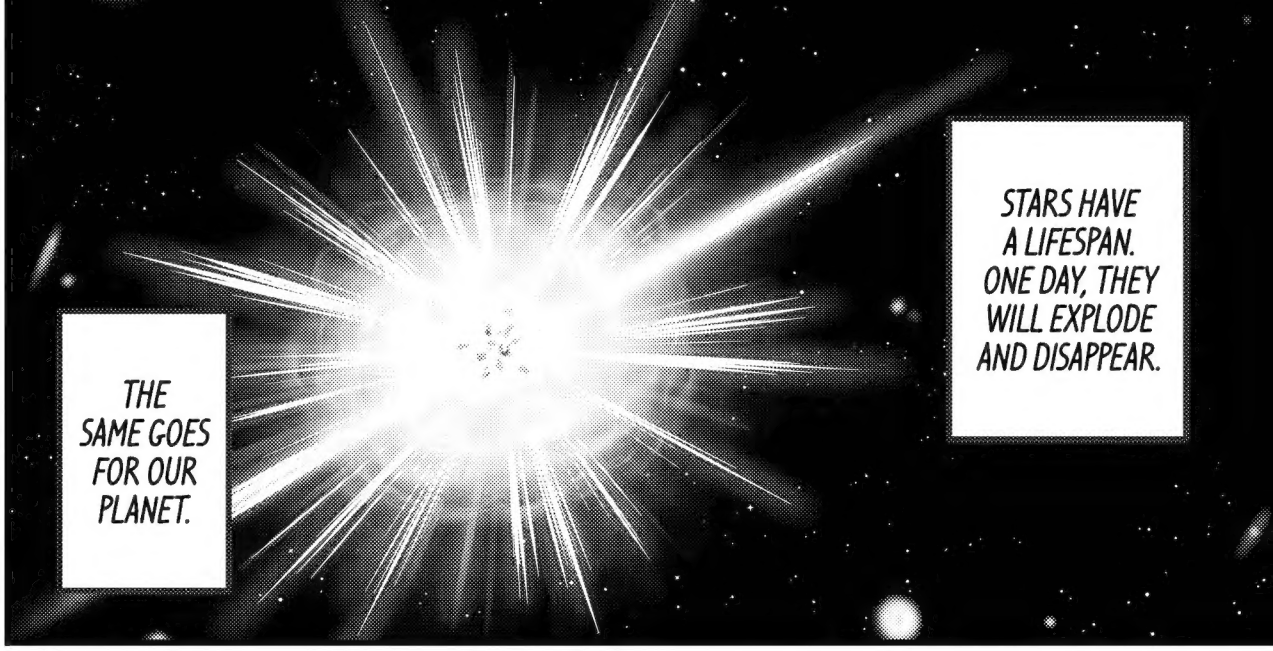
Extra Chapter: If The World Ends One Day



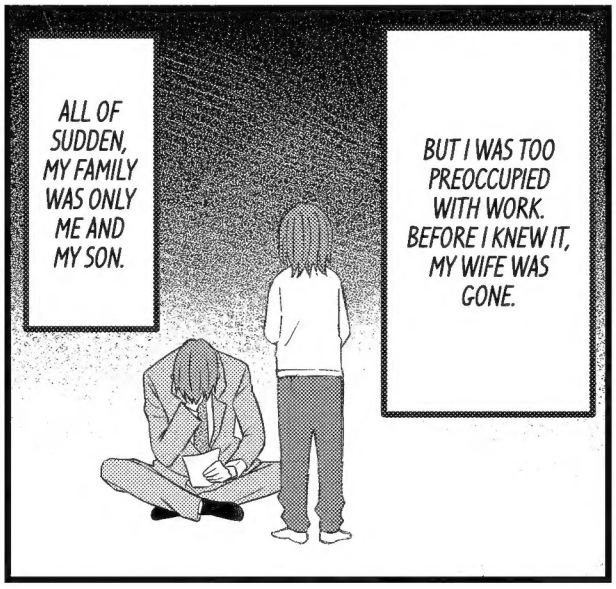

STARS HAVE A LIFESPAN. ONE DAY, THEY WILL EXPLODE AND DISAPPEAR.
THE SAME GOES FOR OUR PLANET.

FWSHHH...
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THAT IF THE WORLD WAS GOING TO END ONE DAY, THE SOONER THE BETTER.

I WAS NOT BLESSED WITH GOOD PARENTS. I WAS ABUSED, LONELY, AND TOO EMBARRASSED TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT...
SIMPLY GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF LIFE, I WAS JUST LIVING FOR THE SAKE OF SURVIVING.
BACK THEN, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE WORLD WOULD END EVENTUALLY AND THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE LOST FOR EVERYONE...
WAS MY ONLY SOLACE.
FWSHHH...
TIME MOVES SLOWLY WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG...
AND I FEEL LIKE I SPENT EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THOSE LONG DAYS WONDERING, "IS IT GOING TO END TODAY?"
NONETHELESS, I WAS ABLE TO GROW UP AND ESCAPE FROM MY IRREDEEMABLE, CRAPPY PARENTS WITHOUT DEVIATING FROM THE RIGHT PATH.
THAT I STILL MANAGED TO HAVE A DECENT LIFE WAS NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE.

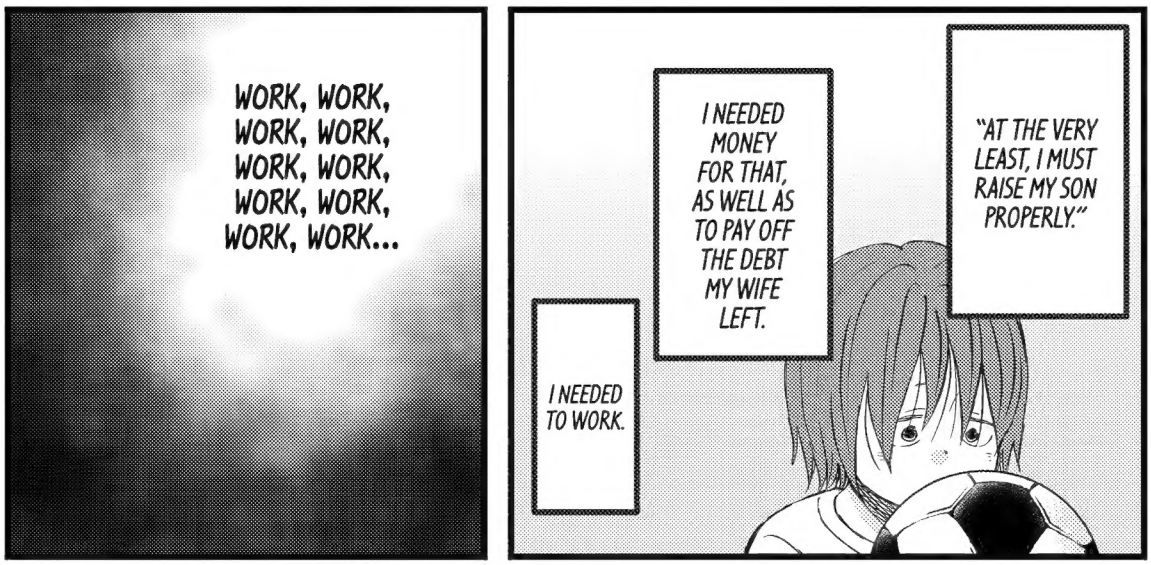
WHEN I COMPARED IT TO MY CHILDHOOD, THIS NEW LIFE SEEMED IDYLLIC.
EVERY DAY, I WOULD WORK FOR MY FAMILY AND COME HOME EXHAUSTED...

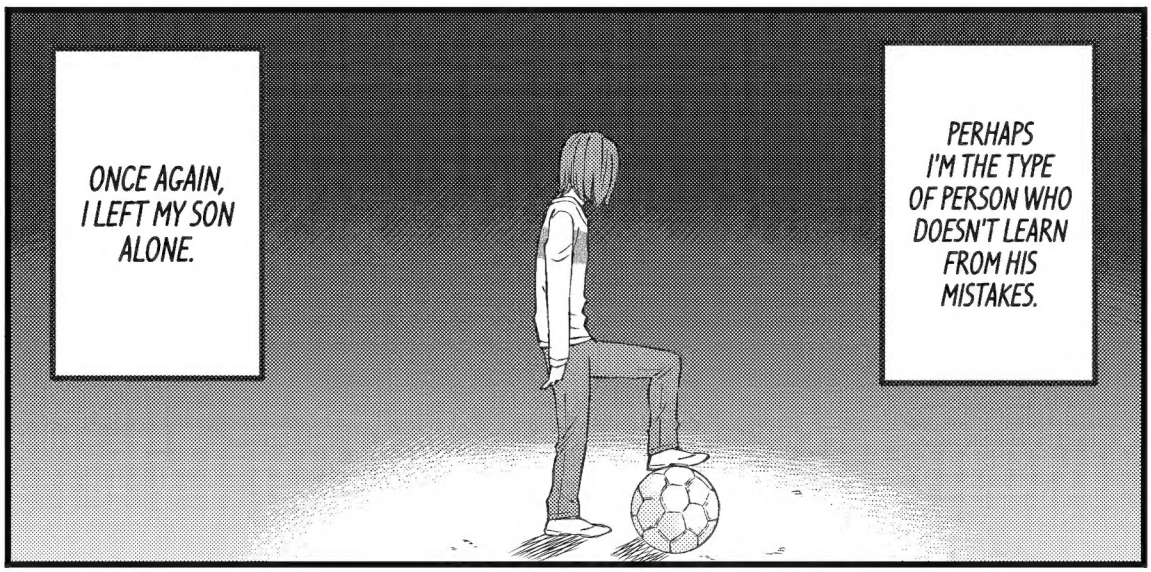
I FELL IN LOVE, GOT MARRIED, AND HAD A CHILD, JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

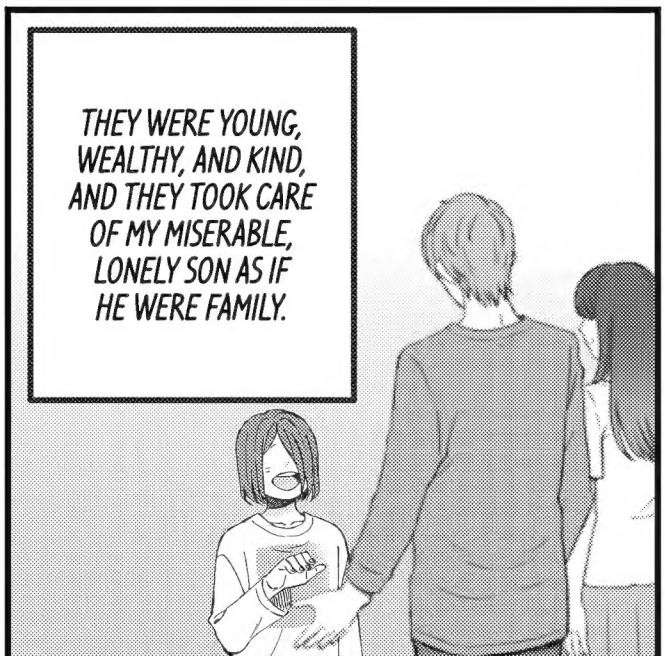

ALL OF SUDDEN, MY FAMILY WAS ONLY ME AND MY SON.
BUT I WAS TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH WORK. BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY WIFE WAS GONE.

SO I WORKED MYSELF TO THE BONE TO ENSURE THAT MY WIFE AND CHILD WOULD NEVER HAVE TO LIVE IN THE SAME DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS THAT I DID.

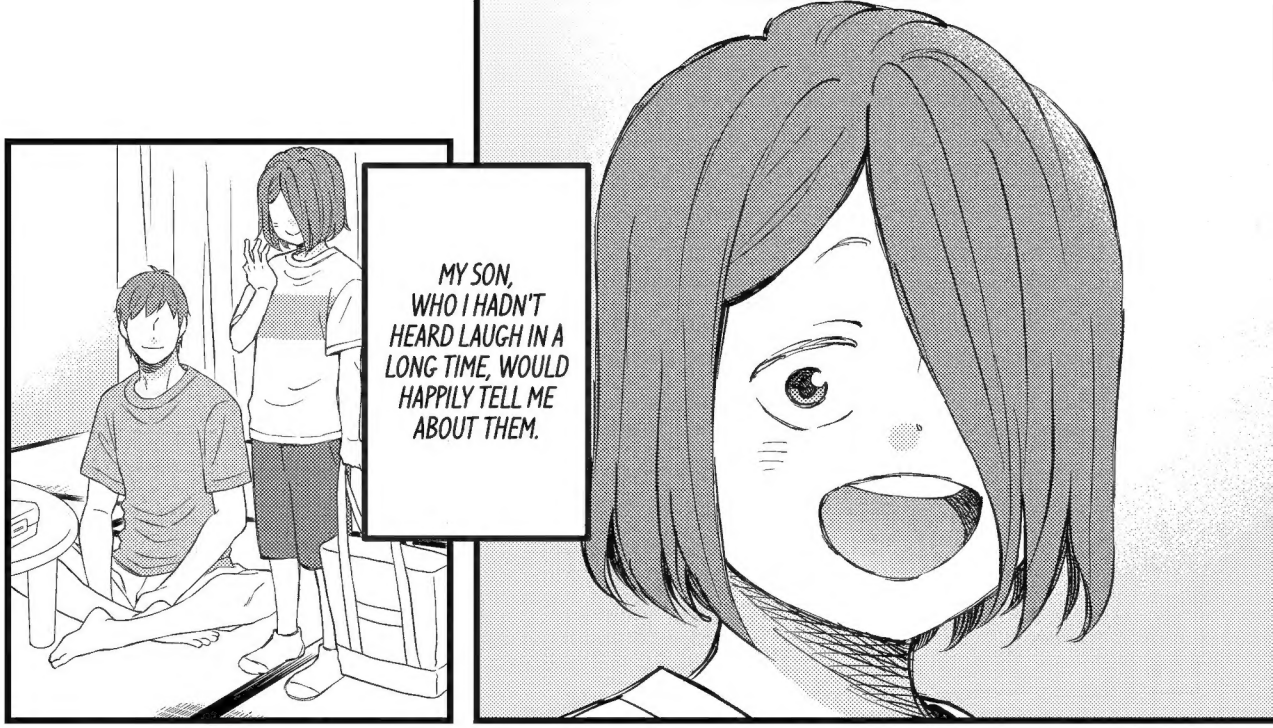
IT'S A COMMON...
INESCAP-ABLE...
CHAIN OF MISFORTUNE.
SOMEONE WITH A MISERABLE UPBRINGING CAN ONLY BUILD A MISERABLE FAMILY.
IN THE END, THIS IS HOW MY LIFE TURNED OUT.


WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK...
"AT THE VERY LEAST, I MUST RAISE MY SON PROPERLY."
I NEEDED MONEY FOR THAT, AS WELL AS TO PAY OFF THE DEBT MY WIFE LEFT.
I NEEDED TO WORK.


ONCE AGAIN, I LEFT MY SON ALONE.
PERHAPS I'M THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO DOESN'T LEARN FROM HIS MISTAKES.

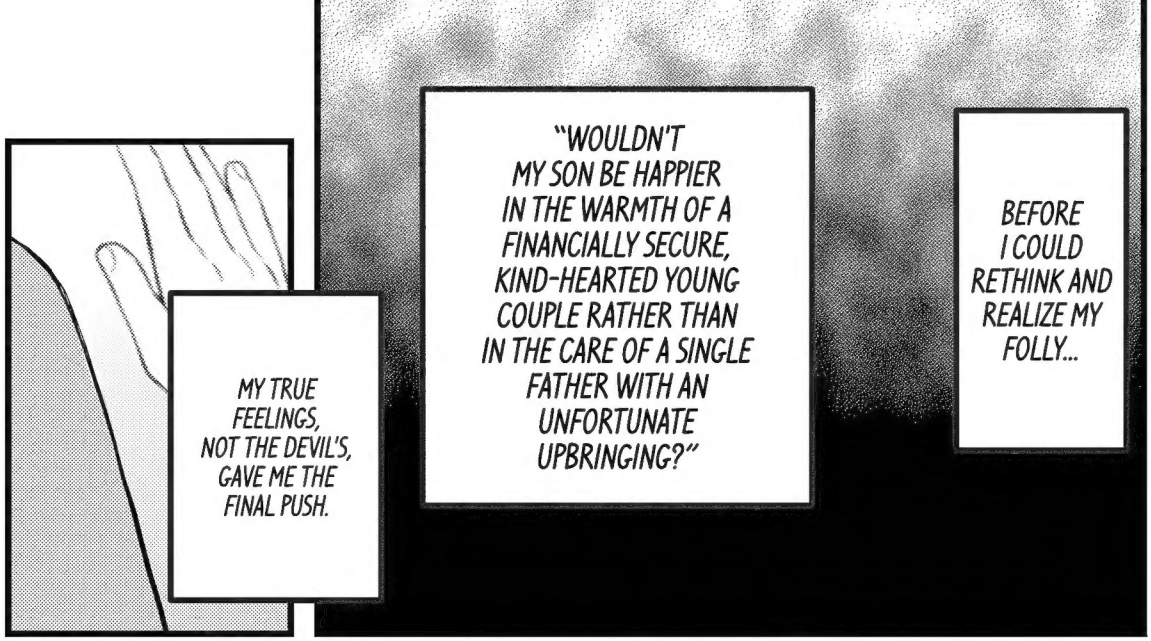

THEY WERE YOUNG, WEALTHY, AND KIND, AND THEY TOOK CARE OF MY MISERABLE, LONELY SON AS IF HE WERE FAMILY.

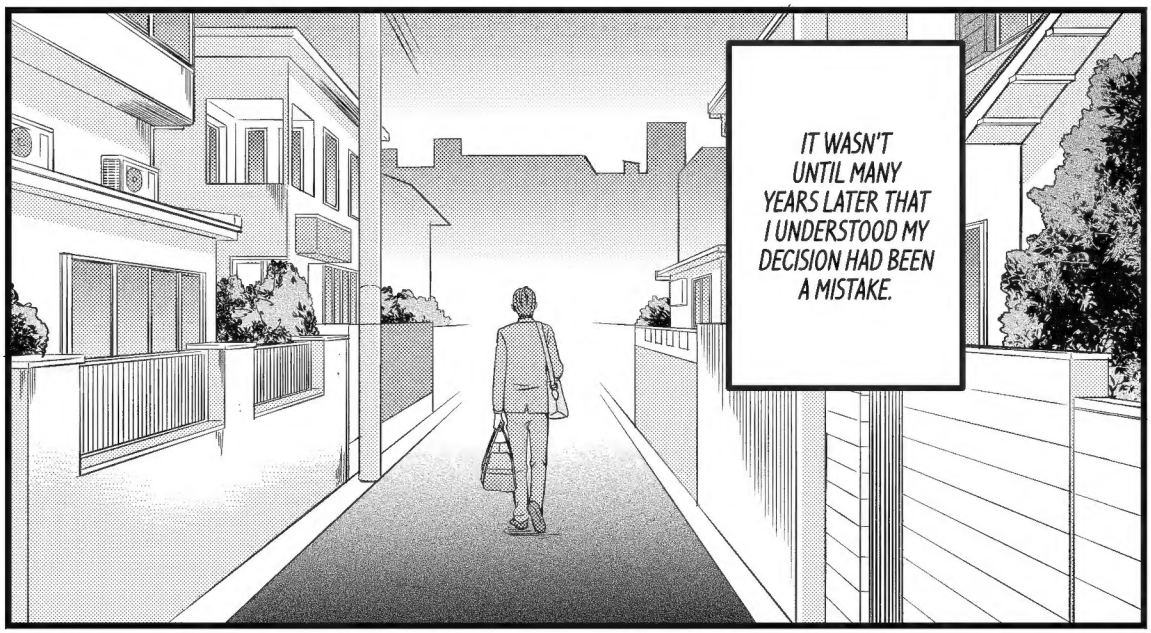
A CERTAIN COUPLE APPEARED.
AND JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I HAD TO DO SOMETHING...


MY SON, WHO I HADN'T HEARD LAUGH IN A LONG TIME, WOULD HAPPILY TELL ME ABOUT THEM.

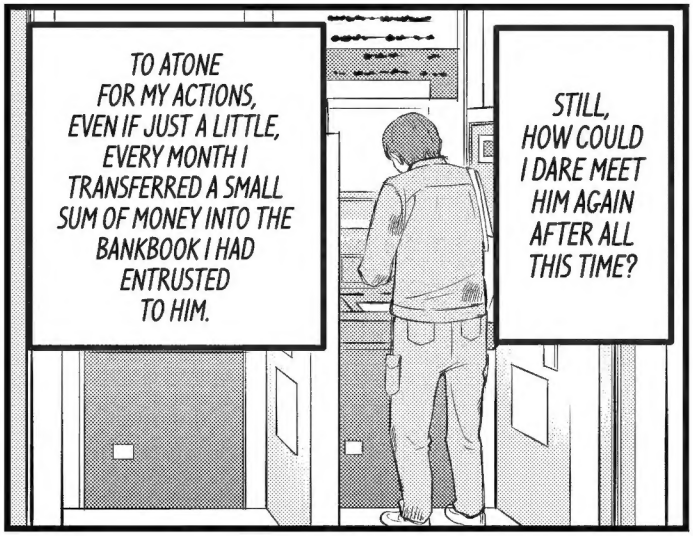
"IF YOU'RE ALONE, YOU CAN PAY OFF YOUR DEBT FASTER."
"YOU I'LL HAVE MORE FREEDOM."

"HEY... WOULDN'T IT BE OKAY IF YOU LEFT YOUR SON BEHIND AND RAN AWAY ON YOUR OWN?"
...THE DEVIL WHISPERED TO ME.

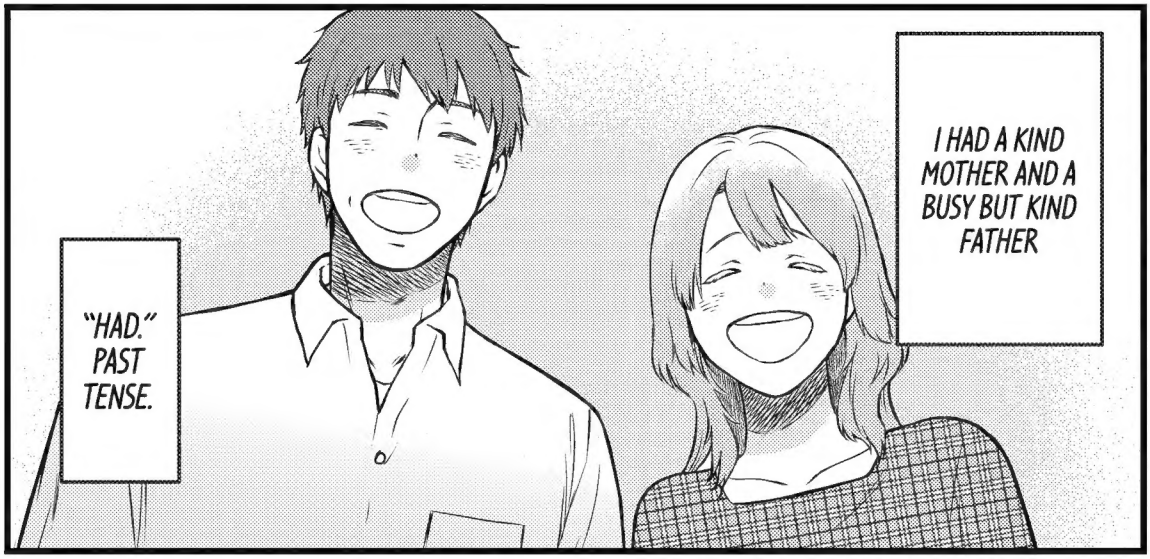

"WOULDN'T MY SON BE HAPPIER IN THE WARMTH OF A FINANCIALLY SECURE, KIND-HEARTED YOUNG COUPLE RATHER THAN IN THE CARE OF A SINGLE FATHER WITH AN UNFORTUNATE UPBRINGING?"
BEFORE I COULD RETHINK AND REALIZE MY FOLLY...
MY TRUE FEELINGS, NOT THE DEVIL'S, GAVE ME THE FINAL PUSH.


IT WASN'T UNTIL MANY YEARS LATER THAT I UNDERSTOOD MY DECISION HAD BEEN A MISTAKE.

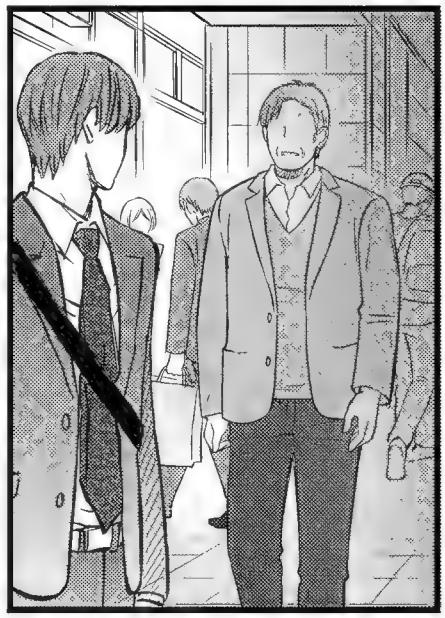
BUT THAT MONEY WAS NEVER USED.


TO ATONE FOR MY ACTIONS, EVEN IF JUST A LITTLE, EVERY MONTH I TRANSFERRED A SMALL SUM OF MONEY INTO THE BANKBOOK I HAD ENTRUSTED TO HIM.
STILL, HOW COULD I DARE MEET HIM AGAIN AFTER ALL THIS TIME?

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THAT IF THE WORLD WAS GOING TO END ONE DAY, THE SOONER THE BETTER.



I met the person I'm destined to be with. I want to live life the way I want.
Good bye.
BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY MOTHER HAD GONE SOMEWHERE, LEAVING ONLY A LARGE AMOUNT OF DEBT BEHIND.
ALL OF SUDDEN, MY WARM HOME WAS BEING DISSOLVED BIT BY BIT BY A STRANGE MAN WHOSE FACE I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
EVEN THOUGH HE HAD DONE NOTHING TO ACCRUE THEM.
EVERY DAY, HE WORKED DESPERATELY TO REPAY MY MOTHER'S DEBTS...
I THINK MY FATHER, WHO WAS LEFT ALONE, DID HIS BEST.
...HEY.
...IS THAT YOU, JUN?
BUT...



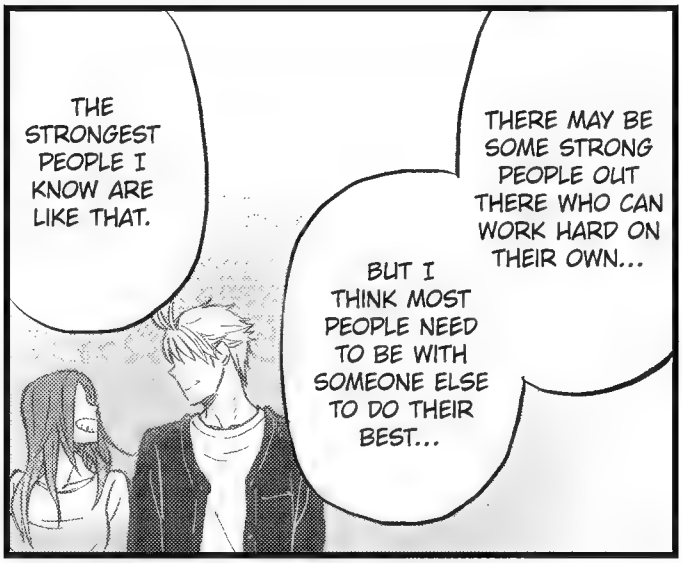
I'M IN MY THIRTIES NOW. OF COURSE I'D BE ALL GROWN UP.
YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP...
HA HA...
LIOIN
LOVE
MIKAGAMI
Material

...I DON'T THINK I COULD DO SOMETHING THAT CRUEL...
I CAME HERE TODAY FULLY EXPECTING YOU TO PUNCH ME.

WHAT I DID WAS ABSOLUTELY UNFORGIV-ABLE...
REALLY?
...I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD AGREE TO MEET ME.
...

I'M A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AT HEART, BUT I WORK, PAY TAXES, PAY RENT, AND VOTE ON ELECTION DAY...
SOME ADULTS LIKE ME ALSO GET MARRIED. WE'RE JUST CHILDREN ON THE INSIDE, BUT WE STILL MAKE MORE CHILDREN AND RAISE THEM...
EVEN THOUGH THAT'S PRETTY AMAZING...
...I'VE BEEN AN ADULT FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW, BUT...
I THINK THAT BECOMING AN ADULT SIMPLY MEANS THAT YOUR BODY HAS MATURED PHYSICALLY.
DEEP DOWN, I FEEL LIKE I'M STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL AND HAVEN'T REALLY GROWN MUCH...
ERR... BUT...
EVEN SO, THAT'S...
NOT EVERYONE IN THE WORLD IS CAPABLE OF WORKING HARD AND ACHIEVING RESULTS.
THERE ARE ALSO ADULTS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF BETRAYING THEIR BELOVED WIFE AND LEAVING THEIR CHILDREN BEHIND...
YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK PEOPLE WHO DO THAT ARE IN A GOOD MENTAL STATE.
ON THAT DAY, AT THAT TIME... I BELIEVE THAT YOU FELT THAT YOUR ONLY OPTION WAS TO RUN AWAY.
TRYING TO CARRY ALL OF THE WEIGHT ON YOUR OWN, I THINK YOU BROKE.

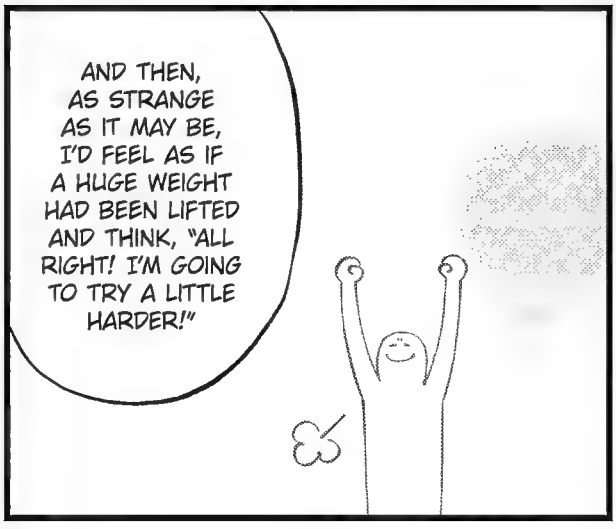
I WISH I COULD HAVE WORKED HARD WITH YOU BACK THEN, BUT...
I WAS TOO YOUNG TO DO SO.


THE STRONGEST PEOPLE I KNOW ARE LIKE THAT.
THERE MAY BE SOME STRONG PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO CAN WORK HARD ON THEIR OWN...
BUT I THINK MOST PEOPLE NEED TO BE WITH SOMEONE ELSE TO DO THEIR BEST...

...
IF I HADN'T MET HER... I DON'T THINK I WOULD BE ABLE TO BE DOING MY BEST NOW...

SHE'S AN ODD WOMAN WHO'S WILLING TO BE WITH A FLAWED MAN LIKE ME.
HER...?
THIS TIME, TOO, IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE OF HER THAT I WAS ABLE TO TAKE ACTION AND CONTACT YOU.

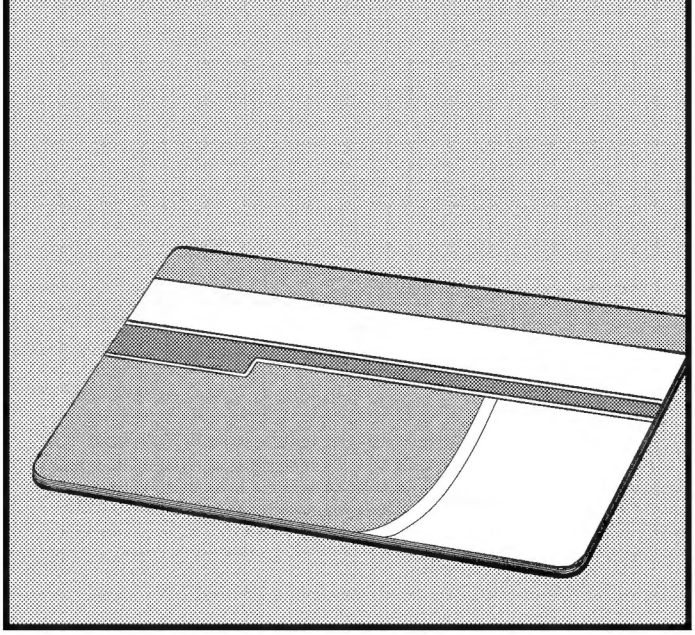
...NO... IT WAS MY FAULT THAT I TRIED TO CARRY ALL OF THAT WEIGHT ALONE...


AND THEN, AS STRANGE AS IT MAY BE, I'D FEEL AS IF A HUGE WEIGHT HAD BEEN LIFTED AND THINK, "ALL RIGHT! I'M GOING TO TRY A LITTLE HARDER!"

IF I EVER FOUND MYSELF IN THAT SAME SITUATION, I THINK I'D PROBABLY RUN AWAY LIKE YOU DID.
YOU KNOW... EVEN THOUGH I WENT THROUGH A LOT AND WAS IN A TERRIBLE SITUATION BECAUSE OF YOU...
WHAAAT...?

Reach...
IT ALSO MADE ME STRONGER.
THE WEAKNESS THAT YOU SHOWED ME THAT DAY HURT ME, BUT...
HEARING THAT YOU...
THAT MY FATHER NOW HAS SOMEONE BY HIS SIDE WITH WHOM HE CAN HAPPILY DO HIS BEST...
MAKES ME INCREDIBLY HAPPY.

JUN...
I'M SORRY...
...
I'M TRULY
SORRY...!



OH, RIGHT. THIS IS FOR YOU...
Rummage
Rummage
...

I NEVER SAW ANY MOVEMENT ON THAT ACCOUNT. I ASSUMED YOU HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT...

ACTUALLY, I'VE ALREADY GOT TOO MUCH. WERE YOU EVER PLANNING TO STOP?
I'M ALL GROWN UP NOW. YOU DON'T NEED TO KEEP SENDING ME MONEY.

ACTUALLY, I WAS CONSIDERING SPENDING THAT MONEY ONE DAY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME DIDN'T WANT TO WASTEFULLY SPEND IT.
OR PERHAPS THAT WAS A DECLARATION OF INTENT ON YOUR PART. THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE A SINGLE YEN FROM ME...
No, not at all.

MOST LIKELY, IT WAS MONEY YOU WERE RAISING WHILE CUTTING BACK ON YOUR OWN LIVING EXPENSES, SO...
I'LL GIVE YOU HALF OF IT BACK.
I HAD WISHED THE WORLD WOULD END RIGHT THEN AND THERE...

BUT AFTER EXPERIENCING MANY ENCOUNTERS AND PARTINGS...
BEFORE I KNEW IT, I FOUND MY LIFE FILLED WITH PRECIOUS TREASURES THAT I DID NOT WANT TO LOSE.
IF IT'S OKAY, I'D LIKE TO SPEND THE REMAINING HALF ON YOUR GRANDCHILDREN.
OH... YOU HAVE CHILDREN?
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU SEE, I GOT MARRIED SUPER EARLY. I HAVE TWO KIDS.
THE OLDER ONE WAS ADOPTED, WHILE THE YOUNGER IS OUR BIOLOGICAL CHILD. THEY GET ALONG VERY WELL.
IT IS LONG PAST THEIR CUTE STAGE, THOUGH.
SO IF THE WORLD IS GOING TO END ONE DAY, I HOPE IT HAPPENS A LOOOONG TIME FROM NOW.